



In Touch



***Newsletter by employees, for employees of the
American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.***

May / June 2002

Braillo Embossers Increase APH Braille Production Capacity, Improve Work Environment

Nancy Lacewell, Public Affairs

APH has been using Clam Shell presses to emboss braille since the 1940s. Over the years, these presses have produced millions of pages of high quality braille. And they continue to emboss page after page today, with the help of highly trained professionals.

While Clam Shell presses make great braille, they do have their drawbacks. They're noisy and can be unsafe. They are also very expensive to operate, primarily since replacement parts for machinery made in the 1940s are not readily available today. Clam Shell presses also use expensive zinc plates that can deteriorate over time, and they can produce only one set of pages at a time. These pages are then sent through a collating process, and on to a binding process.

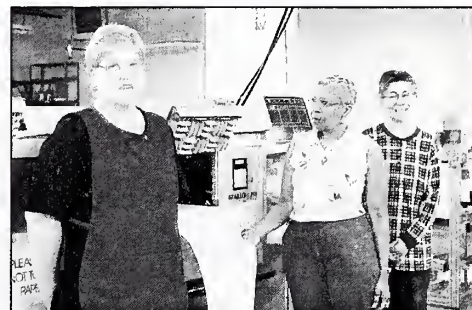
APH has recently developed a new system of producing braille textbooks through the ATIC (Accessible Textbook Initiative and Collaboration) division. Braillo machines, which are high-speed braille embossers, have replaced Clam Shell presses in this new process, which is based on producing one complete textbook

at a time - from transcription through binding. Since the system is computer-

driven, a disc of the transcribed text can be up-

loaded and the Braillo will then emboss the entire text in a very short period of time.

APH currently has three Braillo machines: two Braillo 200s, and one Braillo 400. The main difference between these machines is that the 400 model produces braille pages faster. APH has plans to purchase another Braillo 400 soon, at a cost of \$88,000. Fortunately, **Don Keefe** (Development) has secured funding for this machine from a corporate donor. All of the Braillo machines are currently located on the first floor in the plant, "next door" to the Human Resources, Purchasing and Cost departments.



Patty Raley, Mary Crawford, and Judy Franke (Production) work with Braillo machines to produce textbooks for ATIC.

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In addition to speeding up and streamlining the production process, Braillo machines make less noise than Clam Shell presses, and are much safer to operate. They also eliminate the collating step of production, saving time and labor expenses. Braillo embossers do have limitations, however. At this point, they can emboss only on 11"x11.5" tractor-feed paper, and they can only produce limited dot graphics.

Of course, any production system is only as good as the personnel who operate it. Fortunately, the APH employees who work with ATIC textbook production and operate the Braillos do an excellent job, according to **Jack Decker**, Vice President of Production.

Mary Crawford, who has been with APH for 35 years, trained **Patty Raley** and **Judy Franke**, who now spend much of their time operating ATIC textbook production. Patty also brings many years of experience to the project, having worked at APH in various departments for 28 years. Judy Franke is a relative "new comer," with 6 years at APH. They stress that they work with lots of other staff. In the Production Department, **Kathy Lewis** takes care of file management and makes cover labels, and once staff in the




Linda Hill makes book covers for ATIC textbooks.

Large Type Department have reproduced the artwork, **Linda Hill** makes covers for the textbooks. ATIC and Engineering staff, among others, are closely involved in this operation. **Cynthia Davis** (Engineering) helps with materials design and space planning.

According to **Steve Mullins** (Production), who helped establish the new system and is still involved with operations, the Braillo set up is "...the way of the future. It's simpler, safer, and more efficient." He and Jack Decker both stress that the excellent work of the employees operating the system is the real key to its success. Jack says, "They are well-trained, dedicated employees, and I think everyone involved with this project has been impressed by their hard work and cooperative attitude. It is a real pleasure to work with Mary, Patty, Judy, and all of the other APH employees who have helped get this system up and running, and who operate it on a daily basis.

It is anticipated that within the next 5 to 10 years, Braillo machines will completely eliminate the need for Clam Shell presses, and another production era will come to an end at APH. However, Jack emphasizes that he does not anticipate the need to lay off any employees as the new braille production system is incorporated throughout the plant. The change will be gradual and employees will be provided with appropriate training as they shift to new work responsibilities.

"Although it will be sad to see the old Clam Shell presses stop production, we will all reap the benefits from this necessary change," says Jack. "We will increase our capacity to produce quality braille materials, and our employees will be working in a safer, quieter, and more productive environment."

Judy Franke clearly states one of the major advantages of the Braillo system. "It is very rewarding to take a product from start to finish. When you actually get to see the final product that you have created, it gives you a real sense of accomplishment." 

Featured Employee

Tristan Pierce



In Touch .. ::::

Born and raised in Louisville at Pierce Acres (family farm turned subdivision,) **Tristan Pierce** has traveled widely but always finds her way home to Kentucky. She is the youngest of four children.

Tristan grew up in the Valley Station area of Louisville, graduating from Jesse Stuart High School (now renamed and a middle school). She graduated from Western Kentucky University with a double major in French and advertising, and spent her junior year of college in France. After college, Tristan moved to Boston where she worked in the publishing industry; first working with law enforcement materials and then with children's educational publications. After five years in Boston, she moved to Chicago where she continued to work in children's educational publications.

Tristan got her first job by throwing rocks at the art director's window! When she arrived for her interview the office building was locked up. She saw a light on in an office on the second floor and decided to give rocks a try. It worked! The art director was so impressed with her determination that he hired her.

When she decided that the long hours of being a manager in the publishing industry were just too much, Tristan moved "home" to Louisville. Before long she was off once again, this time to attend the School for International Training in Vermont where she received a Master's Degree in Intercultural Management. She later traveled to Haiti as a volunteer, and for 8 months she worked in an orphanage

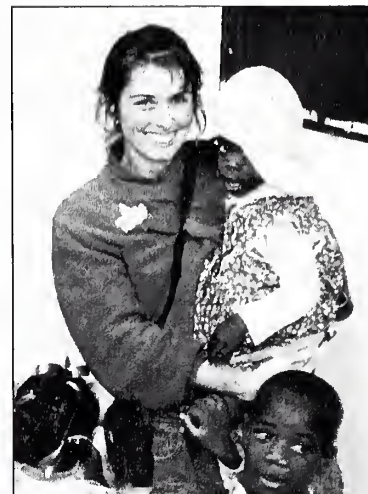
managing a house of 37 four, five, and six year-olds. She taught the children English and art, and organized sports activities.

Once back in Louisville, Tristan managed Louisville's Sister Cities Program during the administration of Jerry Abramson.

She then developed a national volunteer program for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Tristan joined the APH Research Department in November 2000 as a research associate, and serves as multiple disabilities project leader. She enjoys her work because the process of designing and creating products utilizes her creativity, and she is able to encompass her passion for physical fitness in many of the products she works on.

In her "spare time," Tristan is a lap swimmer and coaches swimming at KSB. She also renovates houses and is almost finished with a Victorian house she plans to rent out. Tristan is also a United Nations volunteer, serving as an international elections supervisor. She has worked on elections in Bosnia and Albania, and hopes some day to supervise elections in Haiti and Cambodia.



Tristan Pierce holding **Marie Therese** in Haiti, Christmas Day 1994





Customer Comments

Rosanne Broome, Customer Relations

Letter from a customer...

"I received the Primer Electronic Magnifier, and I gave it to my 87 year-old father who has had Macular Degeneration for the past 8+ years. He has been unable to read anything other than 2 letters at a time under a lighted magnifier. He was amazed at your product! He says he was able to read my mother's obituary for the first time. And it was fairly easy for him. Thank you! You have given my father a whole new world of reading again, and I really appreciate that."

Comments received about the APH website (museum page)...

"Thank you for providing this website. My son is working on a school project for history. You have provided him with such a wonderful support system. I am grateful. We have both been blessed with a better understanding of the importance of this invention and the braille system. Thank you, thank you, thank you. God bless you and all those you serve."

From a teacher at Catlin Elementary School in Kelso, Washington...

"We recently received five free copies of your Special Print/Braille Edition of the Weekly Reader. The Braille Weekly Reader will be used in one of the activity bags that my students check out each week to use with their families. The specific "SMART Bag" in which

the Braille Weekly Reader will be included is called "Disability Awareness" and contains reading material, games, etc., useful in teaching the students about various disabilities.

Thank you so much for the free materials. I know my students and their families will enjoy the opportunity to have the "hands-on" experience learning about Braille.

APH hosted a meeting of the National Council of Private Agencies for the Blind and Visually Impaired in early April. This letter to Tuck Tinsley was later received from a participant from New York...

Thank you for your gracious and generous hosting of the conference. It was a wonderful environment and I thoroughly enjoyed sharing with all. Thanks, too, to all your staff for their efforts and support for all of us. **Don (Keefe)** and **Paul (Zurkhulen)** were terrific, but I know there were many in the background and without their efforts, it would not have been such a great meeting. Thanks for a wonderful introduction to Louisville. It is a great city! ©

APH Bowlers Unite!

Jane Lyons, ATIC

On March 3, the rumblings of bowling balls at Ten Pin Bowling Lanes were racking up dollars for blind and visually impaired seniors across Kentucky. Several APH employees joined with the St. Matthews Lions Club to raise money for the cause. This event and all the proceeds donated by APH employees, their friends, and families will help provide much needed aides, appliances, and services to Kentucky residents over the age of 55. This year the APH team was able to raise over \$600!!!!

Thanks to all who made pledges and who bowled. We hope to have an even bigger team next year. ☻



The APH team this year included (l-r, front); Sharon Williams, JoAnn Hardesty, Mario Eiland,

Jane Lyons, Norm Ballard, Larry Skutchan, (back), Sandy Jeanes, and Jimmy Thompson.

More APH Bowling Team members are (l-r, front); Artina Paris, Theresa Close, Christine Strange, (l-r, back), Jody Bachmann, and Mary Smith.



Members of the team not pictured here are: Doug Trent, B.J. Weatherford, Matt Witten, Debbie Allgood, Lonnie Carnes, Joe Close, Phil Allgood, Lynn Wethington, Amy Harrison, Frank Acre, and Duane Dupont.

Continuous Improvement Corner

Arthur Vaughn, Human Resources

Members of the Tape Duplication Department have brought the importance of having meetings and brainstorming to light with a great success. A simple meeting to discuss postal supply issues allowed workers to question processes and procedures that have been overlooked in the past.



Tape Duplication Department (l-r): Jayma Hawkins, Walter James, Stephany Berry, LaTonya Conn, Kwain Tarrence, Teresa Davis, Moses Drane, Vicki Mowman, B.J. Acra, Terea Bethel. Not pictured are: Terrence Nord, Tonya Pezzarossi, and Debbie Hacker.

It took a team effort of Tape Duplication workers, a couple of Shipping/Receiving workers, three different postal officials making two trips to APH, and a trip to the Post Office by several APH employees to finalize our process change. The new process allows cassette mailers to fall directly into a large hamper thus eliminating the need to first package the mailers into a flat tray (covered tub). This change eliminates one operator from the packaging machine when processing magazine cassettes (except *Reader's Digest* and *Newsweek*) and lessens the motion required

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Send us your news for the next issue!



Aimee Cline (formerly Lester) was married on April 27 at Duncan Memorial Chapel. She and her husband, **Berley**, were high school sweethearts - then went their own ways - and got back together just before their 10th reunion. Berley has 2 daughters; **Wynonna** is 6 and **Mikaela** is 4. Best wishes, Aimee!



The Customer Relations Department had a surprise shower for **Aimee** a few days before her wedding.



Apologies to **Wanda Mullikin** (Braille Transcription) and **Ron Gwaltney** (Educational Aids) for being left off the birthday list in the last In Touch. Happy belated birthday to Wanda (April 15) and Ron (May 12)!



Congratulations to the employees who finally guessed that **Tristan Pierce** visited **Randy** and **Cactus** when she was young! **Suzette Wright** and **Barbara Henderson** (Research), and **Jean Moore** (ATIC).



Welcome to APH new employees! **Jodi Hubbard** (Development), **Eric Peden** and **Andy Riegg** (Engineering), **Paul Long** (Shipping and Receiving), **Neil Aho** (Studio), and **Jayma Hawkins** and **Walt James** (Tape Duplication).

John Aicken Joins the Research Department

John Aicken, management assistant in the Research Department, began working at APH in February 2002. One of his primary responsibilities is to take a close look at processes and procedures within the department and make recommendations for improvements. He will also be studying the ways in which the Research Department works with other departments within the company so that procedures can be streamlined if necessary. John holds a B.A. in math and an M.B.A. in finance, and he hopes to assist with APH budgeting processes in the future.



John Aicken

John is a Louisville native, born and raised in the south end. He and his wife lived in Connecticut before he moved "home." John worked for Seagrams for 30 years, where he began as a laboratory technician. Over the years he worked as a chemist, a biologist, and engineer, a local purchasing agent, and a budget support specialist. His last job with Seagrams was as manager of administrative services.

When asked about his first impressions of APH, John said that he has been particularly impressed with the breadth of expertise and

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the quality of professionals he has met at APH, particularly in the Research Department, since he works closely with them. He has also noticed that most of the employees he has met really want to be at APH, in spite of the myriad challenges they face. He said that he sees a rare and genuine commitment to

APH, and a strong willingness to cooperate with colleagues and go beyond what is required of them.

John asks one thing of his colleagues, and that is to have patience with him as he "learns the ropes." ☯

Featured Employee in the next issue of

APH In Touch .. ::::



Who is this? Some "helpful" clues...

- He sings karaoke, and he's pretty darn good at it.
- His mom worked at APH at one time.
- He once worked at Walt Disney World.
- His grandson is 6 years old.
- His background includes education in bookbinding.

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by the remaining worker. This person's responsibility now shifts more toward quality control by allowing more time to check address labels.

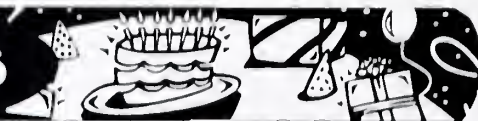
The overall change has been time studied and the results are as follows:

- One worker is removed from the packager (except to produce *Reader's Digest* and *Newsweek*).

- 699.5 hours per year eliminated from packaging process.
- Remaining person has fewer responsibilities with less required motion.

Congratulations on a job well done! ☯

Birthdays



May

2 Johnny Zinnerger
4 Carrie Watkins
5 Denise Jones
Claudia Peyton
Mario Eiland
6 Deb O'Connell
Ann Hodapp
7 Alan Lovell
8 Christine Strange
Norma Huff
9 Ronald Pitney
Stephany Berry
10 Marlene Parker
11 Barbara Henderson
12 Elizabeth Martin
Ron Gwaltney

14 Cynthia Davis
Jacqueline Bush

17 Pat McDermott
18 Ricky Jones
19 Joyce Garner
Vicki Judd
Carol Shanks
20 Frank Hayden
21 Monica Coffey
Theresa Close
23 Dwight Williams
25 Charles Hector
Rosanne Broome
26 Mary Wilson
Sandy Maerz
27 Jan Carroll
29 Becky Moody
30 Jane Lyons

June

1 Flora Long
2 Pamela Rader
Mark Klarer
3 Ronald Warren
4 John Aicken
6 Patrick Lavender
7 Devon Hershey
8 Rita Mudd
Keith Creasy
9 Catherine Fritz
11 Erin Jones
12 Debbie Willis
Larry Skutchan
14 Jeffery Decker
Diana Conley
15 Dena Garrett
Marguerite Allen

16 Wilma Hall
Jean Moore
19 Edwin Shelton
25 Charlotte Kelley
28 Delores Robinson
29 Martha Coy
Walter Foushee
Thomas Burch
30 Pat Packer

July

2 Lee Ann Jones
3 Ann Hill
9 William Randall
10 Carl Shultz
Inge Formenti
Robert Williams
11 Joy Robinson
13 Martha Coogle
15 Kathryn Coddington

17 Doug Trent
Karen Poppe
18 Nancy Lacewell
Ted Zinious
19 Carol Rothenberg
20 Ruth Wohner
22 Kathy Peak
Suzette Wright
23 Jennifer Searcy
25 Jodi Hubbard
Kerry Cundiff
26 David McGee
Steve Paris
28 Scott Parris
Maria Delgado
30 Joan Goodgine
Frederic Morehouse
Tuck Tinsley
31 Tiffany Collier

APH In Touch

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Scott Blome and Bridgett Johnson (Communications)



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